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DE RUEHGO #0477/01 1001040  
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4415  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0805  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9582  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4105  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1565  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3282  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6677  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4291  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0696  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0697  
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0331  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2630  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0272  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000477

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/09/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: THE PRESSED, SUPPRESSED, AND OPPRESSED IN BURMA

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Classified By: Poloff Dean Tidwell for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The GOB continued its harassment of ordinary citizens as well as pro-democracy advocates through pressure, intimidation, arbitrary detention, arrest, and imprisonment. Scattered crackdowns of individuals around the country on various charges during late March demonstrate that the regime will not tolerate any activity that it deems even vaguely threatening to its interests. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) The GOB sentenced two Burmese men to three years in prison on March 24 for taking video photographs in December of the countryside around the new administrative center at Pyinmana. U Moe Htun worked for Dhama Yaik, a religious journal, and U Thaung Sein was a freelance journalist. They took the photos while riding in a public bus and claim they saw no signs that prohibited photography. The court charged both men for operating a video business without a license and gave them the maximum sentence possible.

¶3. (C) Security officials arrested on March 24 former NLD Rangoon auditor U Aung Thein and U Aung Moe, members of an obscure party known as United Front, on charges of possession of a satellite telephone and for contacting an exile group. U Chit Tin, a close friend of Aung Thein and MP-elect from Min Hla township, evaded arrest and reportedly fled to Mae Sot, Thailand. On April 10, GOB paraded U Aung Thein and several other former NLD members before the local press and accused them of having contact with "expatriate terrorists."

¶4. (U) Ko Oo, NLD Secretary of Thayet township and a political prisoner at Tharawaddy Prison, died due to a lack of adequate medical treatment. Authorities finally agreed to his family's request to send him outside the prison for treatment, but he died shortly after he reached the hospital on March 23.

15. (U) Police accused citizen Ko Naing Too of Daik U township, Bago division, of "noise pollution" for playing his guitar while doing voluntary night guard duty for his community. Naing Too fled when police tried to arrest him on March 19. In retaliation, police took his 70-year-old father, his mother, and his younger brother and wife hostage.

16. (U) Authorities arrested seven students of Bago College on March 29 on charges of writing and disseminating a dissident poem titled "Daung Man" (The Peacock's Mighty Spirit). Note: The peacock is an NLD symbol. End Note. They also arrested the owner of the computer cafe where the students printed copies of their poem.

17. (U) Authorities threatened with arrest poor students in North Dagon township of Rangoon, who were receiving free tutoring from the daughter of an NLD member. They wanted the children to stop attending her classes. Authorities accused the teacher of trying to turn the children into NLD members. Most students stopped attending, but 10 brave ones still participate regularly. Adding extra pressure, the tutor's landlord subsequently forced the tutor and her family to vacate their rented house.

18. (C) COMMENT: These cases -- some published in the Burmese exile press, some described by Embassy sources -- occurred in different parts of the country during the last ten days of March. It is quite likely than many more similar cases occurred during the same period. Many democracy supporters and activists believe that such harassment has increased in recent months, although it is difficult to quantify the regime's abusive treatment of the citizenry. Nonetheless, each case that we have documented bears testimony to the profound and pervasive impact that the arbitrary and ruthless regime continues to exert on the lives of all Burmese

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citizens and particularly those brave enough to convey information. END COMMENT.  
VILLAROSA